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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSES DRUG TRAFFICKING AS A
THREAT TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

REF: STATE 125208

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The UN Security Council held an open debate on December 8 to discuss, for the first time, international drug trafficking as a threat to international peace and security with a focus on West Africa. UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa highlighted the "free economic zone" that is fueling East African drug trafficking, and called on the Council to create a "Trans-Saharan Crime Monitoring Network." The debate included 39 speakers, including six ministerial-level attendees, most of whom echoed similar themes, including the principle of "shared responsibility" and the link between drug trafficking and development. Some delegations, including Egypt, Peru, and Venezuela challenged the role of the Security Council on this issue, insisting that it belonged in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and/or Economic and Social Council. Ambassador Rice discussed the international nature of the drug trafficking problem, while also highlighting U.S. assistance to West Africa, Afghanistan, and Haiti. The Council adopted a Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2009/32) that called illicit drug trafficking a threat to international security--the first Council product to do so. END SUMMARY.

UNODC LINKS DRUGS AND CRIME

¶2. (U) UNODC Executive Director Costa briefed on drug trafficking in East and West Africa, the increase of drug flow across the Sahel, and the link between drugs and criminal activity. He cautioned that a "free economic zone" (trafficking in drugs, migrants, guns, hazardous waste, and natural resources) is helping fuel East Africa's illicit activity. Costa called on the Council to consider creating a "Trans-Saharan Crime Monitoring Network" to improve information flow, monitor suspicious activity, exchange evidence, facilitate legal cooperation, and strengthen regional efforts against organized crime.

¶3. (U) SYG Ban Ki-moon said in his intervention that drug trafficking has emerged in recent years as a leading threat to international peace and security, particularly in Afghanistan, Burma, and Colombia. He called for a more balanced approach to drug control that reduces the demand for drugs; promotes alternative development and the rule of law at the source of supply; and disrupts trafficking routes. Ban noted that drug trafficking does not respect borders or people, and is a menace to the health of societies and individuals alike.

U.S. WELCOMES WEST-AFRICAN ACTION

¶4. (U) Ambassador Rice shared the extensive actions the United States has taken to combat drug trafficking in West Africa and around the world. She explained that the United States provides assistance for counternarcotics, law enforcement and criminal justice capacity-building in more than 90 partner countries. Rice welcomed the Political Declaration and Action Plan adopted by West African leaders in 2008, and thanked Senegal for hosting a ministerial-level conference to address regional and national counternarcotics efforts. She also noted that the U.S. had devoted more than \$13 million to addressing the counternarcotics challenge in West Africa.

¶5. (U) Rice underlined that in Afghanistan, the drug trade threatens stability and economic growth by funding insurgents, feeding corruption, and undermining the rule of law. She urged member states to provide extra-budgetary contributions in this regard. In Haiti, Rice said we should not let narco-trafficking undermine the real successes that years of peacekeeping investments are beginning to yield. She noted that illicit actors are smuggling billions of dollars of illegal goods into many jurisdictions and weakening rule of law, democracy, and economic development efforts on a global scale.

¶6. (U) Additionally, Russian PermRep Churkin focused his comments on Afghanistan, particularly on the Paris-Moscow process and less on the role other countries are playing in

the drug fight. (COMMENT: The Paris-Moscow process is a reference to the two ministerial conferences on drug routes from Afghanistan. Churkin called for the third conference to be held in late 2010. END COMMENT.) Churkin endorsed the idea that drug trafficking is a serious and growing threat to international peace and security.

THE "SHARED RESPONSIBILITY" OF TACKLING DRUGS

¶7. (U) Nearly all speakers reinforced the principle of "shared responsibility" in tackling international drug trafficking. Mexico lamented that there has been a normative framework to combat drugs since the 1980s, but "we still have not been able to curb" drug trafficking. Many member states framed the concept of shared responsibility in the context of the UN's integrated peacebuilding and development strategies.

Burkinabe Foreign Minister Yoda stated that the Council should include drug trafficking in the UN's integrated strategies, "as a matter of international peace and security."

¶8. (SBU) A number of non-Council speakers mostly from the NAM or G-77 warned that the UNSC should not try to place drug trafficking onto its agenda. (COMMENT: Vietnam also raised this idea during Council experts' discussions on December 4 and 7, but did not reference UNGA's primacy in its Council intervention. END COMMENT.) Bolivia, Egypt (as NAM Chair), Peru, and Venezuela were careful to make sure they mentioned what UNGA has done, and will continue to do, as the UN body primarily responsible for drug-related topics.

¶9. (U) Venezuelan PermRep Valero said that drug trafficking is not under the jurisdiction of the Council, per the UN Charter, and that the issue needed to be dealt with in an inclusive fashion. He said the Council's inability to manage its current workload (specifically the "ineptitude" shown since it does nothing about the flagrant disregard Israel has for resolutions the Council has adopted against it) suggests it should not take up another issue, like drugs.

UNODC'S ROLE

¶10. (U) Most speakers praised UNODC's role in fighting drug trafficking and organized crime. Ambassador Rice and others welcomed the results of the donors' meeting that UNODC co-hosted with the Austrian Government in Vienna on December ¶3. As Rice and Costa did, most speakers linked issues related to drug trafficking to rule of law and national capacity. Sweden, on behalf of the European Union, exerted that better regulatory frameworks and socio-economic stability will help fight supply and demand of drugs worldwide.

IRAN'S EFFORTS

¶11. (U) Iranian PermRep Khazaei spoke of his country's sacrifice of thousands of police personnel over the years in curtailing illegal narcotics. He also mentioned that Iran had mobilized 30,000 troops along its borders to fight drug flows. He finished by stating that Iran hopes the London conference on Afghanistan in January 2010 will reflect the international community's commitment to combat drug production and trafficking originating from that country.

¶12. (U) The following representatives (in addition to the UNSC members) spoke at the open debate: African Union, Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cape Verde, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt (as NAM Chair), ECOWAS, Ghana, Iran, Italy, Luxembourg, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Sweden (as EU President), and Venezuela. A complete transcript of the debate can be found on the Security Council page at the UN web site, www.un.org/Docs/sc, under "Meetings."
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